

CALIFORNIA RFG FORUM

CALIFORNIA REFORMULATED GASOLINE NEWS

NO. 3 — AUGUST 1995

California RFG Put to the Test in Cars, Trucks, and Equipment

Since early March, more than 700 vehicles from industry and government fleets throughout the state have operated exclusively on California reformulated gasoline (California RFG). This is part of the Air Resources Board's California RFG Performance and Compatibility Test Program—a six-month study to evaluate the fuel's performance in a wide range of cars, trucks, and other equipment. With the program half over, more than 370,000 gallons of test fuel have been used. So far, no problems have been attributed to the cleaner-burning gasoline.

Researchers are watching closely for any increase in failures of fuel system components such

as fuel pumps, hoses, and carburetor parts. They are using past maintenance records to help determine whether any problems are caused by California RFG or by normal wear and tear. In addition, a Technical Review Panel, consisting of engineers and technicians from industry and government, will evaluate information from problem vehicles or equipment.

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PUBLIC EDUCATION

Interview with ARB Public Education Consultant — David Novak

RFG Forum interviewed David Novak, principal of Novak Communications, a Los Angeles-based strategic communications firm. In March, the Air Resources Board retained Novak to design a public education campaign on California reformulated gasoline.

forum: How important is public education on RFG?

Novak: Everything we've learned from public opinion polls points to the need for public education. People must understand the value of RFG. Adults make decisions based on what they hear on TV and radio, from their mechanics and their friends...and from what they read in the newspaper. We need to make sure that they get accurate information about RFG so they can make informed decisions. We've got to make sure the media understands this program.

Forum: What do you see as the biggest public education challenge with California RFG?

Novak: Getting the message out to the 20 million Californians who buy gasoline. People don't think

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Over 90 Sacramento City Police vehicles are using California reformulated gasoline as part of the six-month, statewide test program.

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Consumer
research on RFG
will keep us aimed
in the right

much about gasoline except when it's not available or when cost swings are more dramatic than they are accustomed to. We need to find a lot of different ways of communicating the tremendous benefits of RFG in California.

Forum: What messages should we take to the public?

Novak: We are working on that. The research we've started will allow us to have a very good idea about what messages work and what won't work.

We do know that RFG has tremendous value for Californians. We're able to say, "This is cleaner gasoline. You don't have to change your life-style to get the benefit of cleaning up California's air." It's a win-win situation for the driver and

for California.

Forum: How important is consumer research?

Novak: Research keeps us aimed in the right direction. It will help us focus our campaign on what we know most people are thinking or feeling, as opposed to simply reacting to the loudest voices of the moment. Although industry has done a lot of research nationally on consumer attitudes, the research we're doing through the ARB will give us specific information about California consumers that we can share freely with everybody who is doing RFG public education.

Forum: What's the next step?

Novak: In June, we surveyed 1,100 randomly-selected California drivers by telephone. We then tested the results of that survey in three focus groups around the state. By Labor Day we'll have research results that will help us use our resources most effectively.

David Novak's experience includes environmental communications work for organizations such as the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Nissan North America, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Prior to starting his own consulting firm, Novak served as Director of Communications for L. A. Mayor Richard J. Riordan where he received the Mayor's Medal for his work following the Northridge earthquake.

CEC and ARB Monitor Supply and Demand; Contingency Planning Begins

Supply and Demand — The Energy Commission (CEC) staff continues to refine their estimates of supply and demand for California RFG through the year 2000. The estimates show that the projected supply of California RFG can meet the state's demand for gasoline through the year 2000.

Petroleum Product List — To evaluate the impact of California RFG on production of other petroleum products, the CEC is also preparing an estimated product slate. This will show how the projected statewide production of California RFG may affect availability of federal RFG, conventional gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and other petroleum products.

Contingency Planning — CEC and ARB staff are meeting individually with refiners to explore how, and if, mechanical problems at refineries could lead to disruptions in RFG production. The purpose is to consider how to minimize any potential supply disruptions.

RFG NEWS BRIEFS

- **Health Effects** — The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services has released its final report, "An Investigation of Health Concerns Attributed to Reformulated Gasoline in Southeastern Wisconsin." The study found no connection between exposure to RFG and the acute, adverse health effects reported in Milwaukee.
- **Air Quality: Before and After RFG** — The Air Resources Board will evaluate the effects of California RFG on southern California air quality. Contact: Randy Pasek (916) 324-8496.
- **Public Perceptions** — The American Petroleum Institute has completed a series of studies on attitudes toward RFG. Among the studies' findings—the public is *not* well informed about RFG.
- **Car Makers Support Cleaner Gasoline** — The American Automobile Manufacturers Association (members are Chrysler, Ford, and GM) has released a booklet, *Clean Gasoline Has Come to Your Part of the Country*, supporting the use of RFG.

Natural Resources Defense Council Supports Reformulated Gasoline

by Janet Hathaway—The Natural Resources Defense Council strongly supports reformulated gasoline fuels which can both reduce the formation of ozone and reduce air toxics. The importance of fuels has often been overlooked in public discussions of how to reduce vehicle emissions. Changing fuel formulations is an essential element to improving air quality, in part because it has immediate results: it reduces dangerous air toxics and ozone-forming substances even from old cars. New vehicle technology, by contrast, affects the air quality slowly as new vehicles are purchased and older vehicles are gradually retired.

The levels of ozone or smog in many cities scar our lungs and reduce our breathing capacity. Ozone, which can travel many miles, can stunt plant growth and damage forests far away from urban areas. Motor vehicles are the source of more than half of the substances which, when emitted into the air and bathed in sunlight, form smog. Fuels which are less volatile, which burn more cleanly and which contain fewer toxics, will be essential to protect human health and the environment.

Janet Hathaway is Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, San Francisco.

PERFORMANCE *Cont. from page 1*

“The preliminary findings are very promising and confirm much of what we already knew from previous road and laboratory studies,” says Dean Simeroth, project leader for the ARB Test Program. “However, we need as much evidence as we can get to assure people that California RFG will perform well in everything that runs on gasoline—whether it’s a chain saw, a truck, or an outboard motor.”

To put together a representative test fleet, the ARB enlisted the help of California businesses and government agencies. “The cooperation from administrators, fleet managers, and mechanics has been invaluable,” states Simeroth. “They have provided the critical classes of old and new vehicles and equipment that we wanted to test on California RFG.”

FLEETS RUNNING ON RFG TEST FUEL

Organization	Passenger	Trucks		
	Cars	Light	Medium	Heavy
Bank of America	✓	✓		✓
Cal. State University, Fresno	✓	✓	✓	✓
CalTrans		✓	✓	✓
City of Sacramento Police	✓		✓	✓
County of Sacramento	✓			
GTE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pacific Bell		✓	✓	✓
Totals	333	90	197	153

Operators and manufacturers are also testing California RFG in equipment such as lawnmowers, construction equipment, and marine engines. Research from companies such as Briggs & Stratton and Tecumseh have shown no problems.

ARB researchers are gathering and evaluating data so that information will be available to the public well before California RFG is sold at the pump.

Performance Notes

- Chevron and Texaco are testing California RFG in employee and company autos and trucks—including a good sample of high-mileage vehicles.
- ARB Board member Doug Vagim has joined the ARB Test Program—he is using California RFG test fuel in his 1988 Oldsmobile Cutlass Calais.

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RFG & HEALTH

California RFG Reduces Carbon Monoxide

Motor vehicle exhaust is the major source of carbon monoxide (CO). An odorless, colorless gas, CO is readily absorbed by the body through the lungs and can reduce the amount of oxygen that reaches the heart, brain, and other tissues. It is especially harmful to people with heart disease, chronic lung disease, anemia, and to unborn children. For healthy people, excessive levels of CO can cause headaches, fatigue, slow reflexes, and dizziness. CO reaches unhealthy levels primarily during the winter.


CALIFORNIA REFORMULATED GASOLINE ➡ CUTS CO ➡ TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH		
▲ Added oxygenates	▼ In 1996, RFG cuts CO emissions by <div>11%</div> (1300 tons per day)	▼ Reduces chest pain in heart patients ▼ Protects people with chronic heart or lung disease, anemia as well as unborn children

DEFINITIONS

Oxygenates — Oxygenates are gasoline additives that contain oxygen. Adding oxygenates to gasoline improves combustion, increases octane, and reduces exhaust emissions of CO, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and air toxics. Examples of oxygenates include methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and ethanol.

MTBE — Methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) is an ether compound that is produced primarily from natural gas. MTBE is the most common oxygenate used in gasoline.

Ethanol — Ethanol is an alcohol compound that is produced from the fermentation of agricultural products, primarily corn. Ethanol is used both as a gasoline oxygenate and as a fuel.

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